



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

6751 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite 400, Columbia, Maryland 21046
410-313-6000

JOHN S. BUTLER, FIRE CHIEF • ALLAN H. KITTLEMAN, COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Office of the Fire Marshal Classroom Pre-Inspection of Educational Occupancies

A fire safety inspection will be conducted by the Office of the Fire Marshal at your school. This fire safety inspection will assist you with providing a safe atmosphere for your students, your staff as well as any visitors to your school. Our goal is to maintain a fire safe environment which is one step in leading to a fire safe Howard County.

In order to streamline the process, we ask the items listed below be corrected prior to the inspection. We have prepared this list for your inspection and for future self-inspections.

- 1. Exits** - All exits shall be kept clear at all times. Chairs, desks, teaching supplies or other storage items shall not be placed in front of an exit door. The path leading to the exit shall be maintained free of obstructions at all times.
- 2. Storage** - All storage shall be 18 inches below the ceiling as well as any sprinkler heads in both the classroom as well as storage closets. It is suggested that painted lines or tape be placed on the walls to indicate "no storage above this point".
- 3. Extension cords** - Extension cords shall not be utilized as permanent wiring. Extension cords shall only be used on a temporary basis. All cords and equipment shall be listed by a testing laboratory recognized by the State of Maryland.
- 4. Power strips** - A breaker protected power strip shall be utilized when multiple outlets are needed. Multiple power strips shall not be "piggy backed" together to form a longer service. Major appliances such as refrigerators and microwaves shall be plugged directly in an outlet.
- 5. Curtains, draperies and decorations** – Curtains, draperies and other similar furnishings and decorations shall meet the flame resistance standards outlined by the Office of the Fire Marshal. Decorations are not permitted to hang from the ceiling tiles, ceiling tile grids or sprinkler heads.
- 6. Artwork and teaching materials** - Artwork and teaching materials shall not exceed 20 percent of the wall area in un-sprinklered buildings. Artwork and teaching materials shall not exceed 50 percent of the wall area in sprinklered buildings.

Per County Code, HCDFRS charges for fire inspections, re-inspections and any associated services. You will receive an invoice from the Department of Finance after the inspection is within compliance and all paperwork has been completed.

This program is important and necessary to safeguard the lives and property of the people we protect. Therefore, we ask for your fullest cooperation in correcting any violations so that together we can improve fire safety.